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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to determine which of nine theories of career development and occupational choice were (1) ranked as most important in regard to the role each played in the subject's own career development and (2) were ranked as most important in regard to the usefulness of the theory in teaching and/or counseling students. Each of seventy-one students enrolled in a course (three separate classes) in career education were asked to rank nine prominent theories of career development/occupational choice in regard to the role each played in her/his own career development and in regard to the usefulness in teaching and/or counseling his/her students. Holland's Personality Theory of Vocational Choice was judged most important in the development of the participants' careers. Close behind was Super's Developmental Self-Concept Theory and Blau's Conceptual Framework of Occupational Choice. O'Hara's Learning Theory, Super's Developmental Self-Concept Theory, and Hoppock's Composit Theory had a mean rank of first through third respectively in regard to the usefulness of the theories for teaching and/or counseling students. In addition, a rank-order correlation was computed to determine the degree of relationship between the rankings of the theories in regard to self-development and usefulness in teaching and/or counseling. Correlations ranged from .79 to .98. The order that emerged is subject to further study. Other populations may rank the theories differently, depending on background and experience. (BM)

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THEORIES OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND OCCUPATIONAL CHOICE: SELF AND TEACHING/COUNSELING IMPLICATIONS

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Theories of Career Development and Occupational Choice:
Self and Teaching/Counseling Implications

by

Dr. Alfred J. Mannebach

INTRODUCTION

Career educators who are serious about the further development and refinement of career education have realized the importance of building concepts and programs on a solid theoretical base. However, just as there are many theories of education, there are many theories of career education (Bailey, 1977). Although no clear consensus exists regarding the many theoretical frameworks for career education, many accept the contention by Super (1976) that "the theoretical basis of career education is considered to be career development theory, . . ." For them, a sound theoretical position based upon theories of career development and occupational choice is essential.

If career education is to reach its potential, a greater number of practitioners must become aware of career development theory and a larger percentage of programs must be based on a more solid conceptual base. Bailey and Stadt(1973) contend ". . .that expansion of career education in the schools will require understanding on the part of teachers regarding the vocational development aspect of growth and learning. Teachers must internalize some type of theoretical position relative to career development." Zaccaria (1970) states that "Theory is useful because it enables the practitioner to order and to make sense out of the data. Moreover, theory provides the practitioner

with some basic guidelines for practice."

Zaccaria goes on to say that "theories . . . constitute a guide and an aid in the practitioner's knowing first how the complex vocational behavior of man has been conceptualized and secondly, how he can bring to bear his own education, experience, and professional skill in fostering better vocational choices and/or more adequate career development."

The importance of having practice based upon and guided by theory is further discussed by Bailey and Stadt (1973). "Teachers without a theoretical orientation will find it difficult to select from among the many available types of curriculum materials or to integrate such materials into an organized program of instruction." Zaccaria says that "The practitioner who is unaware of these formulations (theories) misses the background ideas regarding the process which he is attempting to guide or facilitate."

Clearly then, theories of career development and occupational choice must serve as a guide to action for practicing career educators. Not only should practitioners be aware of the various theories of career development and occupational choice, they should also be able to identify and explain the theory which most closely relates to their own self and career development. To be effective in their role of career development through the career education process, practitioners should also base their teaching and/or counseling practices on sound theories of career development and occupational choice. Familiarity with the theories will help them identify those theories which are most useful in their teaching/counseling relationships with students.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the study was to determine which of several current theories

of career development and occupational choice (1) were ranked as most important in regard to the role each played in the subject's own career development and (2) were ranked as most important in regard to the usefulness of the theory in teaching and/or counseling students. Another purpose of the study was to determine the rank order correlation between the subject's ranking of the theories in regard to self development and the usefulness of the theories in teaching and counseling students. An additional purpose of the study was to establish an order of the importance of the theories for self (career) development and for usefulness in teaching and/or counseling students.

PERSPECTIVE/THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Current theories of career development and occupational choice which have implications for career education have been presented and summarized (Bailey and Stadt, 1973, pp.57-96). The authors of the theories make relevant points regarding the implication of their theory for the career development of individuals. To a great extent, the success and expansion of career education in schools will require understanding of the theories of career development and occupational choice by educators.

Bailey and Stadt support the contention by Hoppock (1967) that study of the theories will help teachers (1) to see more clearly the beliefs implied in their own behaviors, and (2) to question and modify many traditional practices and attitudes. Teachers may be motivated to study career development, not only because of professional responsibility, but also because of curiosity about themselves and how they came to be as they are (Hill, 1963).

In this study, an attempt was made to determine the importance of the various selected theories of career development and occupational choice in

regard to the subject's own career development and to the usefulness of the theory in teaching and/or counseling students.

PROCEDURE

A unit on theories of career develoment and occupational choice was taught as part of a graduate course in career education. The course was taught in the summer session for three successive years, 1976-1978. Students enrolled in the course were given the assignment to read Chapter III entitled "Theories of Career Development and Occupational Choice" (Bailey and Stadt, 1973). Nine prominent theories of career development and occupational choice are presented in the chapter. Concurrently, the students were given two assignment sheets. The instructions on the first sheet asked the students to "rank in order of importance, from 1-9, the theories of career development and occupational choice listed below in regard to the role each played in your career development." The instructions on the second assignment sheet requested the students to "rank in order of importance, from 1-9, the theories of career development and occupational choice in regard to the usefulness of the theory in teaching and/or counseling your students." Students were also asked to explain briefly why they ranked the theories as they did and comment briefly on the chief strengths and weaknesses of each theory.

Class discussions and simulation activities related to the career development theories were held during the time the students were completing the assignments to help each student to understand each theory more thoroughly. The completed assignment sheets were collected and analyzed. The mean rank of the theories with regard to self and teaching/counseling implications was computed for the total of all three classes studied.

Rank order correlations (Spearman's rho) were computed for each of the nine theories for each of the three classes studied and for the total of all classes. The correlations were computed to determine the relationship between the importance of the various theories to the participant's self (career) development and the usefulness of the theories in regard to teaching and/or counseling students.

A rank order correlation was computed to determine the degree of relationship between the rankings of the theories for self and teaching/counseling implications for total of the three years studied (Edwards, 1966). Confidence limits for the correlations calculated are also shown (Fitz-Gibbon and Morris, 1978). The coefficient of concordance (Edwards, 1966) was used to measure the degree of agreement among the participants of the nine ranks. The coefficient of concordance was tested for significance by the Chi Square Test, also presented by Edwards. A measure of the reliability of the mean ranks was obtained from the participants for each class and for the total of all classes was also computed (Edwards, 1966).

DATA SOURCES

The data for the study were collected from students enrolled in graduate courses on career education conducted in the 1976, 1977 and 1978 summer sessions at the University of Connecticut. Data were collected from a total of 23 students in the 1976 class while usable data from the 1977 and 1978 classes were collected from 22 and 26 students respectively. Overall, females outnumbered males in the classes 43 to 28. The classes were composed of general and vocational educators from elementary, secondary, community college and university settings. Although teachers composed the largest group, a

number of counselors and administrators were also enrolled in the classes. Being an elective course, the major common bond among the students was the desire to learn more about career education.

Nine theories of career development and occupational choice as presented in Bailey and Stadt (1973) were ranked by the students. The theories were:

- Ginzberg's General Theory of Occupational Choice
- Super's Developmental Self-Concept Theory
- Blau's Conceptual Framework of Occupational Choice
- Tiedeman's Model of Occupational Decision Making
- Bordin's Psychoanalytic Framework for Vocational Development
- Holland's Personality Theory of Vocational Choice
- Roe's Early Determinants of Vocational Choice
- Hoppock's Composit Theory
- O'Hara's Learning Theory and Career Development

FINDINGS

The primary purpose of the study was to determine which of several theories of career development and occupational choice (1) were ranked as most important in regard to the role each played in the subject's own career development and (2) were ranked as most important in regard to the usefulness of the theory in teaching and/or counseling students. Data in Table 1 show the mean rank of theories of career development and occupational choice with regard to self and teaching/counseling implications. The mean rank was computed by summing the individual ranks for each theorist and dividing by the total number of participants, n=71.

As shown by the mean rank in Table 1, Holland's Personality Theory of Vocational Choice was judged most important in the 71 participants' career development. Close behind was Super's Developmental Self-Concept Theory and Blau's Conceptual Framework of Occupational Choice. The Theories of Ginzberg, Tiedeman and Hoppock followed next in mean rank while the theories of Roe, O'Hara and Bordin, et.al., were seventh, eighth and ninth in mean rank respectively.

O'Hara's Learning Theory, Super's Developmental Self-Concept Theory, and Hoppock's Composit Theory had a mean rank of first through third respectively in regard to the usefulness of the theories for teaching and/or counseling students. Data in Table 1 show that the theories of Ginzberg, Holland and Blau follow in mean rank while the theories of Tiedeman, Roe and Bordin, et.al. earned a mean rank of seventh, eighth and ninth respectively with regard to usefulness.

A second purpose of the study was to determine the rank order correlation between the participants' ranking of the theories in regard to self development and the usefulness of the theories in teaching and/or counseling students. Data in Table 2 reveal the rank order correlations, by class, between the importance of the theories for self (career) development and the usefulness of the theories for teaching and/or counseling students. As can be seen from the data, the rank order correlations ranged from .79 to .98, indicating a very strong positive correlation. Confidence limits around r=.79 for 23 cases range from .58 to .90. Confidence limits around r=.98 for 26 cases range from .94 to .98 (Fitz-Gibbon and Morris, 1978). Rank order correlations for the composit of the three classes studied, n=71, ranged from .983 to .994.

A rank order correlation was computed to determine the degree of relationship between the rankings of the theories, based upon mean rank, for self

Table 1

Mean Rank of Theories of Career Development
and Occupational Choice with Regard
To Self and Teaching/Counseling Implications

Importance to Self (Career) Development		Usefulness in Teaching/Counseling	
Theorist	Mean Rank (n=71)	Theorist	Mean Rank (n=71)
Holland	3.63	O'Hara	3.58
Super	3.76	Super	3.74
Blau, et.al.	4.49	Hoppock	4.21
Ginzberg	4.73	Ginzberg	4.55
Tiedeman	4.89	Holland	4.75
Hoppock	5.18	Blau, et.al.	4.76
Roe	5.32	Tiedeman	4.73
O'Hara	5.46	Roe	6.20
Bordin, et.al.	7.26	Bordin, et.al.	7.86

Table 2

Rank Order Correlations By Class Between The Importance of The Theories For Self (Career) Development and The Usefulness of The Theories For Teaching/Counseling Purposes

Theorist	Spearman's Rho		
	1976 Class n=23	1977 Class n=22	1978 Class n=26
Ginzberg	.94	.90	.93
Super	.96	.94	.92
Blau, et.al.	.92	.95	.95
Tiedeman	.94	.92	.98
Bordin, et.al.	.92	.93	.97
Holland	.90	.92	.97
Roe	.91	.91	.94
Hoppock	.88	.89	.94
O'Hara	.79	.84	.91

and teaching/counseling implications for the combined group of the three classes (Edwards, 1966). The rank order coefficient was .27 with confidence limits for 71 cases ranging from .04 to .47 (Fitz-Gibbon and Morris, 1978).

The coefficient of concordance (Edwards, 1966) was used to measure the degree of agreement among the participants of the nine ranks. As shown by the data in Table 3, the coefficient of concordance of .112 obtained for importance to self (career) development was significant at the .01 level as shown by the Chi Square test for the coefficient of concordance (Edwards, 1966). The reliability of average ranks was also computed, r_{xx} = .89. It is a measure of the degree to which we may expect the average ranks obtained from two groups of m comparable judges to agree.

A coefficient of concordance of .189 was obtained for teaching/counseling implications. As shown by the data in Table 3, the Chi Square test for the coefficient of concordance was significant at the .01 level. The reliability of average ranks was .94.

DISCUSSION

The study should have implications for educators involved in career education programs at any level. Teachers and counselors should internalize some theoretical position regarding their involvement in teaching and/or counseling their students. A theoretical framework based on theories of career development and occupational choice will help practitioners assist students to explore, prepare for and make decisions regarding their future careers.

Results of the study seemed to indicate that students enrolled in the graduate courses do identify with some theorists, namely Holland, Super, and Bleu, et.al., more than others, i.e. Roe, O'Hara and Bordin, et.al. in regard to the importance that the theories have for self (career) development. That an order

Table 3

Degree of Agreement Among the Participants of The Nine Ranks for Self (Career) Development and Teaching/Counseling Implications as Shown By the Coefficient of Concordance

Importance to Self (Career) Development	Usefulness in Teaching/Counseling
$w = .112^{**}$	$w = .189^{**}$
$\chi^2_r = 63.46$ df=8 $p < .01$	$\chi^2_r = 107.466$ df=8 $p < .01$
$r_{\overline{xx}} = .89$	$r_{\overline{xx}} = .94$

has been established is important; it represents the collective judgements of educators who were interested enough in career education to enroll in a graduate course to find out more about it.

That an order has been established in regard to the usefulness of the various theories of career development and occupational choice is also important. Regarding usefulness in teaching and/or counseling, it is interesting to note that O'Hara's learning theory was ranked first. This finding may be evident because a majority of the participants were classroom teachers. Although most of the participants indicated that they would use an eclectic approach to teaching and/or counseling students, the theories of O'Hara, Super and Hoppock were ranked higher in usefulness than others such as Tiedeman, Roe and Bordin, et.al.

The order that emerged in this study in regard to "importance" and "usefulness" is subject to further study. The question of importance of the various theories to self (career) development seems to be an individual decision based upon self knowledge and past experience. Other populations may rank the theories differently depending on background and experience. Further study in this area is encouraged.

A more cohesive group of educators, i.e. vocational teachers only, elementary school teachers only, or counselors only, etc., may not agree with the order established regarding the "usefulness" of the theories in teaching and/or counseling students. Orders should probably be established for targeted groups along with the identification of those aspects of the theories that seem to make them useful. Again, further study seems to be warranted.

Another inportant finding in the study was that regardless of how the various theories were ranked, the participants tended to rank the theories judged most important to self (career) development as most useful in teaching and/or counseling students. The rank order correlations of .79 to .98 obtained offer evidence that the participants tended to find useful for teaching/counseling

purposes those theories which were most important in their own self (career) development. The data suggests that knowledge of how one perceives the importance of the theories in regard t· self (career) development could have important implications for teaching and/or counseling students. Certainly this proposition warrants further study and more vigorous treatment.

Although very high correlations were found between the participants' rankings of the theories in importance for self(career) development and usefulness in teaching/counseling situations, the rank order correlation between the composit rankings of the theories for self and teaching/counseling implications was .27 with confidence limits for the 71 cases ranging from .04 to .47. This finding indicated that there was a weak positive correlation between how the participants ranked the importance of the theories for self (career) development and the usefulness of the theories for teaching/counseling purposes.

As shown by the coefficient of concordance, the degree of agreement of the participants for self and teaching/counseling implications was significant. This inding, along with the respective reliabilities of .89 and .94 for self and teaching/counseling respectively, offered evidence that the agreement of the participants was sufficiently good that it could not be accounted for by chance.

In summary, theories of career development and occupational choice have had and will continue to have implications for many individuals. For individuals, they provide a fascinating study in determining how people came to be who they are and to do what they are doing. For groups, they help establish a theoretical framework upon which further theory and practice can emerge. Further study of the importance and usefulness of the various theories is called for. Also, further research regarding how the theories can be brought to bear on practice should also be conducted.

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